

BEFORE THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Barbara Beerhalter	Chair
Cynthia A. Kitlinski	Commissioner
Norma McKanna	Commissioner
Robert J. O'Keefe	Commissioner
Darrel L. Peterson	Commissioner

In the Matter of a Summary Investigation to Evaluate the Provisions of Northwestern Bell Telephone Company's Access Service Tariff for Customer Billing where Originating and Terminating Recording Capability Does Not Exist for Feature Group A and B Access Services

ISSUE DATE: December 2, 1987

DOCKET NO. P-421/CI-86-721

FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND ORDER

FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

This investigation is an outgrowth of the Northwestern Bell Telephone Company (NWB) Switched Access Charge Case, Docket No. P-421/CI-85-352. The Minnesota Department Of Public Service (DPS) recommended, in its comments on NWB's compliance filing in that case, that the Commission initiate an investigation of NWB's access charges for Feature Group A and B access in exchanges where NWB does not have the equipment to measure the number of minutes these access circuits are used by interexchange carriers. The DPS indicated the assumption that these access circuits are used 9,000 minutes per month for billing purposes overstated the actual usage on these circuits and resulted in excessive charges for interexchange carriers.

The Commission initiated a summary investigation in this matter by Order dated December 18, 1986. The Order required NWB to study the actual number of minutes these circuits are used each month and to file a revised tariff if appropriate.

NWB submitted the results of its time measurement study in May 1987. NWB also submitted a proposal to reduce the assumed usage of these circuits from 9,000 to 6,000 minutes per month for billing purposes.

The DPS replied to NWB's proposal in a Report dated June 12, 1987. The DPS indicated that NWB's time measurement study is reliable. However, the DPS indicated that the study shows these access circuits are used an average of 4,391 minutes per month. The DPS recommended that the Commission direct NWB to base the rates for these circuits on the actual minutes of use indicated in the time study, rather than on NWB's proposal to base rates on 6,000 minutes of use.

The Commission also received comments from four interexchange carriers. Bemidji Long Distance

Service, Red Wing Long Distance Service, MCI Telecommunications, and National Teleservice all supported a reduction in the assumed number of minutes used for billing purposes.

In a letter dated June 26, 1987, NWB agreed to accept the DPS proposal to use 4,391 minutes in order to resolve this matter.

The Commission finds that the actual monthly usage of these circuits is 4,391 minutes based on the time study conducted by NWB. It would be unreasonable to continue billing for these circuits under the provisions of the existing tariff which assumes that these circuits are used 9000 minutes per month when actual usage data is available. Further, no party is opposed to the proposal to use 4,391 minutes of use for billing purposes. The Commission concludes that the proposal to use 4,391 minutes per month for billing purposes is reasonable and should be approved.

ORDER

1. Northwestern Bell Telephone Company shall revise its tariff for Feature A and B Access Services where call originating and terminating recording capability does not exist to reflect 4,391 minutes of use per month as discussed in this Order.
2. The rate changes required by this Order shall be effective for service rendered on and after December 14, 1987.
3. Northwestern Bell Telephone Company shall file revised tariff pages reflecting the decisions contained in this Order no later than December 11, 1987.
4. Northwestern Bell Telephone Company shall notify all affected customers of this rate change in writing with or before the issuance of the first bill for service on or after December 14, 1987.

5. This Order shall become effective immediately.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

Mary Ellen Hennen
Executive Secretary

(S E A L)